15 December 2020

[redacted]
Productivity and Technology Branch
Communications Infrastructure Division
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
5Ginitiative@communications.gov.au

Attention: Australian 5G Innovation Initiative – Round One – Discussion Paper

The Australian Logistics Council (**ALC**) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications on its *Australian 5G Innovation Initiative – Round One* **(the Initiative)** Discussion Paper (**the discussion paper**).

ALC is the peak national body representing major companies participating in the freight logistics industry. Our policy focus is on delivering enhanced supply chain efficiency and safety.

General Comments

ALC recognises the need for the Australian Government to continually review and adapt its approach to the essential services all Australians rely on for our ongoing prosperity, safety and security.

ALC represents the major Australian logistics supply chain customers, providers, infrastructure owners and suppliers. Freight does not stop at state borders, which means that ALC's members bring a national perspective to how legislation is implemented. Similarly, ALC's membership is mode agnostic, bringing together perspectives from road, rail, air and sea freight operators, as well as those that provide specific logistics operations such as Australia's exporters and importers.

ALC works with all levels of government to ensure it considers the needs of the logistics industry in its investment and policy decisions. ALC focuses its advocacy efforts on key areas with the aim of improving supply chain efficiency:

1. Supply chain logistics safety
2. Infrastructure and regulation
3. Technology

ALC's focus on these key issues recognises the importance of efficient supply chains to Australia's economic and social prosperity. High performing supply chains, underpinned by consistent regulation, appropriate national infrastructure and seamless information transfer across the freight logistics industry, enable the smooth flow of goods from production to consumption. They are critical to supporting future economic growth, encouraging investment, building more sustainable communities and preparing Australia for future global, national and regional challenges.

One of the positive consequences of the pandemic is a fundamental rethink of global supply chains. Where businesses once valued price above all else, the world is starting to value certainty of delivery and quality even more highly. That is a significant opportunity for a nation like Australia where quality has been at the heart of the brand for decades.

Responses to relevant questions

- **Do you have any comments on the types of use cases that the Initiative is seeking to support?**

  ALC has no specific comments on the types of use cases the Initiative is seeking to support however noting, existing 4G networks provide consistent serviceability to fast-moving transport such as trains and trucks which may inhibit industry from upgrading to 5G technologies.

- **What are the technical, regulatory or other barriers to implementing 5G use cases? If you have identified barriers, can you suggest ways these barriers could be overcome?**

  ALC has identified the need for the Single Freight Data Standard for Australia, appendix 1, and note the adoption of this standard would be beneficial in the roll out of 5G applications in the logistics and supply chain sector.

- **Are there any technical, regulatory or other barriers to implementing 5G use cases? If you have identified barriers, can you suggest ways these barriers could be overcome?**

  ALC does not foresee any significant issues in the implementation of 5G use cases. Potential issues might relate to the justification to move away from 3G and 4G to 5G. However, this can be overcome through education and demonstration of the benefits.

- **What are your views on the level of maturity of 5G applications available to be trialled, and are there particular sectors which could best demonstrate 5G's productivity benefits?**

  5Gmm wave network base station could be installed within a warehouse and integrated to the public 5G network. This could also work at a port or intermodal facility. This would enable ultra-low latency connections so that automated equipment could be effectively remote-controlled as well as the ultra-high bandwidth connection could support high-definition video streaming for automated video analytic monitoring of the equipment for compliance & safety applications.

- **What locations offer the best opportunities to deliver 5G projects, and are there any barriers to delivering projects in particular locations, or geographic regions?**

  ALC note it is important regional and remote Australia can access 5G technologies to ensure equitable opportunities. Opportunities may arise in Northern Australia, given recent recommendations received out of the Senate Committee Report into the Northern Australia Investment Fund. ALC note this is an area of geographic significance to the government. 5G technologies would be well suited to mining and agricultural environments, feeding back into the 5G public network from base stations.

1. **Given the quantum of funding, what type and scale of projects could the Initiative appropriately support?**

   ALC assess based on the quantum of funding pilots could be tested for efficacy and productivity. Based on response to pilots additional funding could be sought to commercialise or further commercial partnerships could be established to broker the product to market.

2. **What are your views of the proposed requirements for joint applications, grant agreements, grant value and the payment structure of the Initiative? Are there other program requirements that should be considered?**

ALC broadly agrees with the proposed requirements and regarding payment structure, ALC recommends three payment instalments to better support small to medium enterprises to participate in the Initiative.

3. **In what timeframe could projects under the Initiative be feasibly implemented?**

   ALC anticipates projects could be implemented within relatively short timeframes (12 to 18 months) dependent on the maturity of relationships with technology partners.

4. **What do you consider are the best ways to promote 5G use cases within industry sectors and more widely? Do you anticipate any barriers to sharing case studies?**

   As the peak body for the supply chain ALC can commit to sharing case studies through our communications channels to our membership and more broadly. In 2021 ALC intends to host a technology summit in Western Sydney in June where 5G use cases could feature. ALC Forum to be hosted in Canberra in October 2021 would provide further opportunity for promotion to the industry.

5. **Do you have any comments on the proposed assessment criteria, including their ability to support a variety of projects from diverse applicants?**

   ALC broadly agrees with the proposed assessment criteria, however, reinforce the need for criteria to be sufficiently broad to encourage the uptake of new technology.

6. **Should the program have any specific limits on what qualifies as 'technology that operates using 5G'? If so, what would these limits be?**

   ALC agree the criteria for application and assessment needs to be focussed on 5G technology however, while not be so prescriptive that it disincentivises interest or ideas.

Conclusion

ALC thank the Department for the opportunity to respond to the **'discussion paper'** and are committed to working with the Government to support the uptake and roll out of 5G technology applications.

Should you wish to discuss this submission further, I can be contacted at [redacted]

Yours sincerely,

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Chief Executive Officer

Attachment 1: A Single Freight Data Standard for the National Digital Framework